CHAPTER - II

BENGAL TRILOGY

The first set of later plays of Asif Currimbhoy is *Inquilab* (1970), *The Refugee* (1971) and *Sonar Bangla* (1972). These plays are grouped together because Bengal is the common subject and they deal with the different socio-political conditions in Bengal. So these plays are called as "Bengal Trilogy". The word "trilogy" means a series of the three plays written on same situation or theme forming a continuous story. Dr. Chandrika puts it as "Some critics have grouped it (*The Refugee*) along with Currimbhoy’s *Inquilab* and *Sonar Bangla*, written in 1970 and 1972 respectively, and called the group 'The Bengal Trilogy'. The themes of *The Refugee* and *Sonar Bangla* are connected with the problems of Bangladesh but that of *Inquilab* is the Naxalite revolt which disturbed West Bengal in the '60s. Unlike Western trilogies like *The Oresteia* or *The Wesker Trilogy* or *Mourning Becomes Electria*, these three plays do not have a common theme or common characters..."[1]. This chapter deals with themes and technique in detail.

*Inquilab* is a popular play of Asif Currimbhoy written in 1970. It focuses on a real incident and situation occurred in Bengal specifically the Bengal naxalite movement. It is an agrarian movement who are influenced by few naxalites against the landlords. This play is also translated in Bengali language and successfully produced in Bengal regional theatre.
Prof. Datta is a major character, a Law Professor in a university and a staunch follower of Gandhian and Asutosh philosophy. Sir Asutosh Mukerjee is a Vice-Chancellor of the university and the Chief Justice. Datta teaches non-violence to the students. Amar is a son of Datta. Ahmed is the another character who left the house and went into Mizo hills, returned as a naxalite loaded with revolutionary ideas and violence. Another important character is Jain, a rich landlord who has a daughter named Suprea. There is a love affair between Amar and Suprea and inclined to get married. Jain is sympathetic, kind and empathetic landlord. He treats the farmer with respect and toils with them in fields. He treats farmers of his land as his family members. Shomik is a young farmer who knows that this father Dada and his mother worked in lands and got less to fulfill their livelihood. Sarala is a wife of Shomik, manages the family in a humble way. Devadas, a politician tried to bribe Shomik and asked him not to inspire other famers against landlords. But Shomik, being influenced by Ahmed, is very determined to be the owner of land where he had been working since many years. He does not want to work as a slave, as his father, grandfather used to work.

There is a main conflict in the play and it is the conflict of two thoughts and beliefs. The main conflict lies between the Maxist and the Gandhian ideology. This conflict is solved at the end, there are two groups fighting against injustice. One group includes Prof. Datta, his innocent
wife, and Suprea. Prof. Datta believes in non-violence and follows the path of Gandhiji. Another group includes Amar, Ahmed, Shomik and other youngsters who believe in revolution, violence and bloodshed. Both are correct in their end but there is a lack of discipline in the methods of the agrarians and Naxalites.

Krishna Avatar Agarwal puts “the play is essentially based on socialism. This social awareness influences the lives of men and women of the country. Socialism is always based on right thinking. Awareness of our own rights without disturbing the rights of others. We are all children of one great father, therefore everybody has the full right to lead a peaceful and well settled life”.

Prof. Datta is conservative and traditional, always believes in the non-violence, the patience and the democratic ways of life. He teaches the same to his students in the classroom. He realizes that the younger generation is very impatient, hasty and impulsive. They want to change the society within few days but change of society takes its own time. The youngsters are loaded with revolutionary ideas. They have taken the wrong path of violence to fight against the social – injustice and this path leads to bloodshed. The social injustice can be fought with non-violent method, without bloodshed. Datta feels very pity and “says”– Difficult times, I admit Calcutta my Calcutta, ‘a dying city’? processions? Strikes?

Prof. Datta is unable to preach the philosophy of Gandhi and sir Asutosh to Amar and Ahmed. The students in the University are very intolerant of existing system. The education system does not provide food or employment to them. The landlords are exploiting the labours. There is a big gap between the rich and the poor. Poverty, injustice and corruption exist everywhere. The bustees are increasing with the stench of faces and dirt. Hence, they have taken the path of violence and bloodshed. A. K. Kamalkar presents this situation as “In the play *Inquilab*, we are offered the doyens of the Naxalites who embody the spirit of anti-colonial nationalism. They find their inspiration neither in India nor in the west; they are inspired by the anti-capitalist communist ideology of Marx, Lenin and Mao. To them, the present system is rotten, semi-feudal and bourgeois.”⁴

The argument among Jain, Datta and Amar at dining table reveals the anger of younger generation, they are eager to take action.

Amar: Tell me, they’ve been with you for many years, have n’t they? Possibly their fathers and grand fathers were serfs to your ancestors?
Jain: Yes

Prof: Amar!

Amar: No Baba, let me have my say. And I meant it for his good, whether he believes me or not. Time’s changing. Jain-ji, time is changing. And you’ll be swept with the change unless you change too. Listen, listen to me, it’s no longer a question of distributing surplus land. You’ve flaunted that law, laws that well-intentioned men like my father made. It's too late now… (with deadly earnest) We’ll grab the land, man, because the young like me are impatient and hungry. Then there will be no distinction between the good and the bad landlord, because being landlord is bad enough! (p 17-19).

The argument continues with high tension, Amar makes it clear that the land belongs to the tiller, not to the landlord. He asks them not to register lands in the name of brother or sisters. Jain replies with same intensity that it belongs to him, his father, his grandfather who owned and looked after it, worked in land and nobody is going to grab from him. Thus younger students consider Jain as a symbol of the feudal system that they hated.

Ahmed influences the students and ask them to start a revolution. Mao’s thoughts, people war, and communist thoughts lead the revolution. In order to make the revolution successful he suggests the students to
collect farmers, mobilize them and influence them to fight for their rights. He gives a strategy to make the movement a successful one as:

“Without peasant’s there can be no revolution. To reject this is to reject the revolution”: … he further continues and says there are four ways as “one we must go among the masses and concern ourselves with their weal and woe. Two the mobilization of the people will create a vast sea in which to drawn the enemy. Three seem to come from the east but attack from the west, avoid the solid attack the hollow… deliver a lightning decision. Four the only way to final victory is the strategy of protracted war” (p25-26).

Ahmed’s words inspire the students and they started to organize farmers' union. They go to villages to awaken them to know their rights. Ahmed put before the students the real condition of farmers. They are working hard for the benefit of landlords. They are leading a worse life of disease, hunger, want and death and the same will be given to their children. The landlords suck the blood of the farmers. Hence the farmers must be free from the present state of cruel slavery. All landlords are not same, most of the landlords are cruel; very few are kind, there are some exceptions likes Jain. He is a landlord, very kind and sympathetic towards farmers. He always extends help to the farmers and toils in fields with farmers. The revolutionists are unable to find out the true nature of Jain. Therefore, they consider Jain as a representative of landlords. Hence he
became enemy of the class, a symbol of greedy, cruel, inhuman landlord. The charity is offered but it is not accepted by the revolutionists.

Shomik is an active member of this revolution. His wife, Sarala is sad as her husband takes active part in revolution. She is happy with the existing condition but Shomik being a socialistic is very angry. He feels that he has to work for other farmers. He is aware of exploitation of farmers in the hands of landlords. Most of the farmers live in the state of cruel slavery and he must fight to set them free and give their legal right.

Jain, a landlord and Devadas, a politician tried to allure Shomik not to take active part in the movement but he is firm with his decision that he awakes the farmers. The conservation between Shomik and Devadas is worth quoting:

Shomik: (Coldly) I want this land…

Devadad: … this…?

Shomik: … now! (fractional pause)

Devadas: (angrily) oh come now, Shomik! You want 100 much too soon!

Shomik: ( Catching Devadas by his coat). I’ve been waiting too long, Devads, Generations! And tell me how much land does Jain have? Ceiling of 50 acres? I know he has much more. You make the loopholes to play his game… and now you want to use me. No Devadas No. you have your friends… I have mine too. (p.36)
Devadas played a filthy game to come to power still he wants to control the government. Ahmed is aware of the dirty dance of politicians. Devadas is now convinced that revolution is about to take place as he has seen the burning fire in the eyes of Ahmed. Now the situation has gone out of the control of state government. The central government would come and rule the Bengal to maintain law and order in the burning city of Calcutta.

Ahmed, Amar and Shomik are very anxious to see the result of revolution. Amar ignites the minds of classroom students; Shomik inspires the farmers, others inspire factory workers, now the revolution will kill injustice, old way of life, slavery and corruption and create a new world where all are equal “Build the new world that is as close to God’s image as man is” (p.40).

Prof. Datta has patience to teach the students that our constitution guarantees that every human being has birth right to get property. He pleads the students to have faith in the government, the law and the constitution but the students do not care him and they start to shout as - "Inquilab Zindabad". They burned the books, break tables, chairs and try to break the statue of Sir Asutosh, Prof. Datta tries to protect himself but he is flung down by the Naxalite students. Prof. Datta clasps Ahmed to his breast, Ahmed slowly disentangles one arm holding a peasant’s sickle and with a jerk he buries it deep into the professor’s back.
Inquilab is a socialistic play as it deals with socio-economic and political problems like injustice, inequality, poverty and unemployment. Prof. Bayappa Reddy puts it “Inquilab is essentially a play of social realism. Social realism is the acute awareness of the social forces that surround the individual, their power to influence the lives of men and women and the overall interaction of individual and society. Social realism as a theatrical stylization is very attractive to the playwright because it has given his dramatic art verisimilitude; he has infused his work with the breath of life and has also allowed the maximum opportunity for comment”.

Asif Currimbhoy deeply analyses the psyche and emotions of the characters. The farmers are in confusion whether to join the revolution or not. One of the farmers says that if he joins he would get land or he may land in jails. If he does not want to join he would be left out. There is a great confusion of local government, whether to allow the central government to get into Bengal to control the revolution or use their own force to suppress the revolutionaries. In this confusion, the social condition goes out of the control. Jain has revolver with him; police have lathis and peasants are armed with spears and sickles to go for land grab. The peasants are disgusted with the unfulfilled promises of Devadas, a politician. Now they take law in their hands and they measured the land and have the equal share of it and they want to give a share to Jain also. All shout as "Jotedar Mardabad! Inquilab Zindabad", all peasants march to
grab the land. The movement of land grab turned into a violent, innocent people like women and children become victim. Amar warns Suprea that her father Jain has a revolver and farmers are very angry with him they may harm him. Suprea runs to seek the help of the police. The Inspector is also helpless, because he has limited power and the police needs extra power to control the movement. The farmers have violated law and order. There are goondas behind every garbage dump and there is a naxal behind every desk. Hence the central government (Presidential Rule) may intervene to control the situation. The Inspector is frustrated with confused situation and shouts – “poverty, unemployment, and injustice. Refugees, Corruption, Filth politics. Shall I continue? " (p.64.).

Asif Currimbhoy uses new technique to present the argument among revolutionaries and the death scene of Jain on the stage. There is a trial of mock law persuade all farmers make a trail of Justice in the fields. Jain is treated as guilty. Amar as a public prosecutor has to argue in favour of Jain and another person is to argue against Jain. All force Jain to accept that he is guilty but Jain boldly and firmly refuses the accusation that he is not guilty. Jain is a kind and sympathetic person but he is a landlord. Jain is judged as an enemy of the class and not of an individual. In this anguish, Jain is killed: “A scream; a penetrating horrifying scream; Suprea’s shattering, completely shattering... Simultaneously two images; the tenth arm of Durga carries a bloody served head of clay and together
the beam of the torch shines full on Jain’s head hung on two poles, eyes
dilated into death, hair dripping with blood”(p 65 - 66).

The act of revolutionists has shattered hope of Datta and Amar; both
are disillusioned. Later Prof. Datta became victim of the wrath of
revolutionaries. They come in group plundered his library and the statue
of Austosh. Amar was one among them but they have promised that they
would not harm his father, and they failed to keep up their words. Amar
being confused and helpless to save his father. He is unable to take one
side completely as Ahmed and Prof. Datta are able to believe in revolution
and non-violence respectively. He realizes that his father’s views are
correct, meanwhile farmers' revolution is apt in their way. He knows Jain
is a kind landlord but failed to save him. He is loyal and guilty. He is
guilty that he is responsible for his father’s death. Ahmed consoles him
that he is not responsible for his father’s death and he died in Naxal raid.
Shomik has become a great leader. There is always a fight for justice but
ways differ. Each one believes that his or her path is correct which results
difference of opinions and chaos sets in. Liberation is achieved through
revolt, there is always struggle to survive.

The play ends with the arrival of Data’s wife to balcony with a tray
in her hand picking out healthy rice seed as she flings the rice into the
fertile green soil. There is a proverb “As you sow so you reap”, healthy rice
is to sow and same healthy rice is grown. The play ends with faint music of
a Shehnai playing as it is in a marriage. The dramatist concludes the play with optimism that good days are about to come.

Asif Currimbhoy proves his skill in artistic craftsmanship by well-structured plot. There are three acts in the play- Act I has two scenes; Act II has no scenes and Act III has two scenes. Act I, scene I takes place in the classroom, where Prof. Datta is lecturing the students. Amar is present in the classroom important characters like Prof. Datta, Amar, Datta’s wife, Jain and daughter of Jain i.e., Suprea are introduced. Action takes place in classroom, shifts to the house of Prof. Datta and moves into dining room and ends in the garden outside the house of Prof. Datta. In Act I, Scene II Ahmed character is introduced, he is a son of Prof. Datta, who ran away in Mizo hills and now returns as a Naxalite activist. Action takes place in the classroom. Other major characters like Somik, a farmer, Sarala his wife, Dada his father, and old woman, his mother and Devadas a politician are introduced in this scene.

Act II starts in a classroom where Prof. Datta is lecturing the students, but they are reluctant to listen his words. The climax of the whole revolution takes place in this act; Jain is killed mercilessly. Prof. Datta is disillusioned as youth have taken wrong step to achieve right justice which leads to bloodshed.
Act III is also important and gives proper conclusion to the play. There is proper beginning, middle and an end in the play. Asif Currimbhoy concludes the play with a ray of hope. All the characters are given proper conclusion. Shomik is unable to convince Sarala that revolution is never ending. Sarala feels they are happy with a small piece of land but Shomik aspires more, believes that better man should get more land and small piece of land is not everything in life. He joins the revolution and believes that revolutionaries never die. He believes that Sarala will take care of his children. Amar and Suprea’s conversation reveals Amar’s confusion with himself. He struggled sincerely to save Jain but failed, it is very horrible that Jain was killed in an inhuman way. Prof. Data is a victim of wrath of revolutionaries. Amar is guilty that he is responsible for his father’s death; though he is convinced that he is not responsible, he is disillusioned. Suprea runs after him which indicates to be with him throughout life in any circumstance. Ahmed looks at his mother i.e. wife of Prof. Datta who is throwing healthy rice to fields and it ends with hope that good days will come in Bengal. Faubian Bowers Puts it as “For Currimbhoy, *Inquilab* has special significance, and not merely as a peopled portrait of a city and province. ‘The play is a nightmare and redemption of today’s Calcutta’ he wrote to me and added, ‘Amidst all the uncertainties, I am still trying for what is production in this heart of disturbed Calcutta disturbed heart some peace.”6
There are three sets, the first scene is a classroom in one of the colleges of Calcutta. Set show part of the college building with communist slogans scrawled on the walls and a red picture of Mao with hammer and sickle. The second scene is the prayer room at the residence of the Professor decorated with a library containing leather-bound books on law lining the shelves and walls. The third scene is the beautiful green Bengali countryside portion of a fertile plot of cultivable land and Zamindar's house.

The disturbed situation, tension and nightmare is reduced with the touch of humor and romance. Amar argues with Jain at dining table in Datta’s house. Jain supports landlords and Amar expresses the condition of farmers, and how they are exploited by other landlords. Amar becomes hysteric and cannot control his anger. He leaves his food and goes out. Jain sends Suprea to consol Amar. Suprea comes and tries to console him and they play like two children of running after each other. This shows the playwright’s aptness of use of romance in the play. Asif Currimbhoy is a skilled writer, he uses humour and romance to reduce tension and relax the situation.

The playwright uses the music to show the intensity of the situation. The revolutionists enter Prof. Datta’s library and plunder all books and the statue of Asutosh. Amar comes forward and threatens if anyone comes near his father he would kill them. The revolutionists take
their chapples and tap the desk and make a rhythmic sound to show their unity and allow them to take action against Prof. Datta. The play ends with fainting sound of Shahanai of a marriage. This music is a symbol of happiness, new life, ray of hope and good days to come.

The characters are the means of expression of thoughts of the author. Prof. Datta is an expression of ideology of the non violence, law and order. Jain is a representative of landlords but differs from majority of other cruel and greedy landlords. Thus he becomes the victim of agrarian revolt. The character of Amar represents the students class who are misguided to take wrong path. The two woman characters -Suprea and wife of Prof. Datta are humble and supportive. Prof. Datta's wife worships the idol of Ma Durga and she is portrayed as ray of hope. Suprea supports and warns him to be conscious of his actions as his actions would lead to great harm to his father. Ahmed is one of the major characters. He is a mouthpiece of ideologies like Maoism, Communism and Leftism. He goes to the Mao hills and returns as a Naxlite. He is intolerant of injustice in society and influences farmers and students to revolt against the landlords. It is assessed that Asif Currimbhoy presents the characters to express the ideologies. The language of the play is lucid, simple and suitable to characters. There are Hindi words in the play such as Zamindar, Inquilab, Zindabad, Shakti, Puja, Mastaan etc.
To conclude, Asif Currimbhoy is successful in presenting injustice, inequality, exploitation, hunger and revolution to fight against social problems. *Inquilab* is a well structured social play with single theme and limited characters. There are always two or more paths. There is a confusion among people to select the paths in the play. One group believes in non-violence, bloodshed, and immediate result. They are influenced by Maoism and communism. There is lack of discipline in the agrarian movement. The proletariat also join the revolt which finally results in nightmare, bloodshed and disillusionment. The another group believes in non-violence and peace to change the society. In violent fight innocent people become victim like common women, children and Jain, a kind hearted landlord, who is made as a symbol of the system of which they hated. The opportunists like politicians make use of their power and try to gain vote bank. The Police is helpless as they have less power and facility. There are idealists who wanted to find out moral values and correct the situation. The words like mortality and conscience have no meaning in revolution. Water Meserve says "*Inquilab* shows the same anguish as the author extends his play about the Naxalite movement far beyond Bengal. By dramatizing different views of government, he builds his plot to the point of a test for self or nation - where everyone must act, perhaps revolt, to survive."7
The Refugee (1971)

Asif Currimbhoy is conscious of major social events of the society. During 60's and 70's the socio-political upheaval shattered the life of the common people. At the time of Pak division, a thousands of people become refugees and they moved in search of safe shelter. The dramatist observes the situation and uses the dramatic form to present the same condition. The title of the play itself shows the subject matter of the play; The Refugee deals with the predicament and psychological trauma of refugees of East Pak, who were wiped out of their native land in East Pak by Pak army. The Refugee is a one act play, written by Asif Currimbhoy and published in 1971. The play was further translated into Malayalam by the distinguished writer Dr. K.M. George. Sonar Bangla majorly focuses on the independence of Bangladesh and minor theme is the suffering of innocent people in the hands to Pak army and how they moved to India in search of safe shelter. The main theme of The Refugee is the struggle of the refugee to survive and impact of the refugees on the Indian people. This play also deals with search of conscience of Yassin, who is also a refugee.

Initially the number of refugees was in thousands, slowly it increases to millions, later the number reached to 10 million. It is difficult of make proper arrangements for refugees. Bayappa Reddy puts about play as – “Currimbohy is deeply interested in the exodus of ten million Bangladesh refugees into India in 1971. The play also seeks to explore the change in status between the refugees of 1947 and those of 1971”.

The play opens at one of the border towns of West Dinajpur district in West Bengal and the time is 25 March 1971. Yassin, a refugee comes to the house of Sen Gupta. He is a son of Rukaiya. Sen Gupta and Rukaiya grew up in Comilla, a place in the East Bengal. They departed after the Independence of India. Rukaiya remained in West Pak, Sen Gupta came to Bengal and settled down. Rukaiya died of heart attack. Sen Gupta promised to Rukhiya he would look after her son Yassin if anything happens to her. The play moves around Yassin. He is welcomed by Sarala, wife of Sen Gupta and his two children Ashok and Mita. Ashok is busy with the liberation of Bangladesh and Mita is a volunteer of social work with the refugee rehabilitation centre. All the family members are eager to hear from Yassin about the situation in East Pak. Sen Gupta heard the worst situation in the university. The intelligentsia and Awami League’s leaders were wiped out. Yassin is very cold to express his views on the situation in East Pak. Sen Gupta is angry that he does not know anything about the situation. Yassin reveals his fear of digging his grave, he says –

“...We were lined up along the football quadrangle and told to dig the earth. I must have known it was my grave I was digging but the thought left me strangely cold. I was already beyond. there were my love ones to. my mother who had died but whose memory and existence was precious to me; amongst the living, my old professor, my young student, weeping
beside me. The rattle of the machine guns in all I remember. A shattering reality that erased all that followed, blocking pain, suffering and death. I survived, miraculously, if living means surviving. A reflex action, uncalculated, brought me here... to continue living without passing judgment, interfering or helping..."9 Hence he does not want to infer and make sides.

Sen Gupta is one of the major characters, at the time of India-Pakistan division, he came to Calcutta as a refugee. He worked hard and settled down and became a responsible citizen. As a refugee he is able to understand their plight. He sympathizes with them and ready to give shelter, food and other help to them. Later he changes his words, he is worried that they would encroach his garage and land, if the influx of refugees continues they will enter his house and he will be an outsider. Sen Gupta represents rich class of Calcutta, who came here as refugees, became prosperous and forgotten their suffering. He is intolerant of encroachment of the refugees. Sen Gupta wonders about Yassin who has closed his mind to the politics, the refugees and his home. Sarala is a gentle woman, laughs at Sen Gupta she feels her husband used to give great statement of help to refugees, now feels irritated and angry to help them. There is lots of difference in saying and doing. Ashok has decided to join Mukti Faju. He kept his uniform in a cupboard and his mother
found it. She does not want him to join Mukti Fauj but Sen Gupta support him to do the task of fighting against Pak army.

Ashok is young and energetic man who is aware of condition of common people in East Pak. He convinces to his parents as he says:

Ashok: It’s true! I’m trying to join the Mukti Fauj. Someone has to do the fighting.

Wife: But… but, Ashok… you are just a child.

Ashok: (Indignantly) I’m not!

Sen Gupta: The Mukti Faujs are n’t our problem Ashok. They belong across the border.

Ashok: (Angrily, victoriously) they are our problem, Baba. We’ve got to help them, where do you think they get their arms and ammunition and training? Here… across the border… in West Bengal. Everyone knows it, except you, to course. No, you’re too busy talking about town elders and elections. The crux of the problem is to throw the Pakistan army out with guerrilla assistance to our Bengali brothers! (P 23-24)

Sen Gupta is restless with the increased number of refugees. He talks to Mosin, his friend that India will no longer remain secular because Pakistan army is exterminating majority of Hindus. His family is divided, Mita joins the social work to help refugees and Ashok to Mukti Fauj. His
children become more idealistic and committed. Sen Gupta is of opinion that it is time to take more aggressive step to stop this problem. The refugee exodus is an undeclared war by Pakistan. Hence it is time to declare a war. The two problems i.e. the problem of refugee and the problem of Bangladesh must have a political solution. Because the politics is an inseparable reality of life.

Yassin burst out that there must not be a war, because solution cannot be brought out by killing more people. He is confused with his identity. He is born in Pakistan, brought up in East Pak (Bangladesh) by Rukhiya and got shelter in India in the house of Sen Gupta. He is in dilemma; to whom should he be loyal? Finally, he realizes that he has to be loyal to his mother Rukhiya i.e., Bangladesh, then he should not be a traitor to India. He says – “Baba. (Softer) Baba, understand me. I will never be traitor to my mother’s love. or to Bengal. It flows through my veins as not had pure as yours. No more accusations… or judgment. I would not break bread with you… and be disloyal. But you must allow me. freedom of thought and action, or else you deprive me of refugee in this very house of yours” (p.33).

Yassin is in search of his own identity and consciousness and remains closed to the situation. He is encouraged by Mita to identify himself with the refugee. She has been working hard for refugee rehabilitation and problems have been increasing. Hence she requests him
to be active and do something for refugees. Because he is a refugee, he can understand their feelings better than anybody else. He should not remain unattached and unidentified with the refugees. The disease cholera is spreading in refugee camp, disease and death has been increasing. Hence everyone must realize their conscience and help the refugee irrespective of religion.

Sen Gupta is restless and anxious that refugees would take the bread and opportunities of the local people. Earlier he said that he would welcome the refugees, later he is worried that they would encroach his land. Their arrival would hamper the development of India. His children Ashok and Mita are not aware of their life but devoted themselves to help the refugees. He is unable to realize the fact that when a neighbor is at trouble another neighbor has to help them. Sarala laughs cynically at double standards of Sen Gupta. Mita is completely devoted to the refugees. She is tired, worried and disillusioned to the worst condition of refugees.

Asif Currimbhoy presents quest of conscience in the character Yassin. He got a job in a university, but Prof. Mosin is doubtful of his abilities. Further his job created resentment in other unemployed youth. Yassin goes to refugee camp with Mosin to find his conscience and soul. All the time it reminds him that he is one among the refugee. He got safe shelter and a job too. But he is guilty that other refugees are suffering. He
is unable to forget the past and unattach his identity with the refugee. It took time for him to accept the fact that he is a refugee, miraculously escaped the machine guns at the notorious intellectual massacre of university scholars by the Pakistan military dictator General Yahya Khan. He could not realize that it is his duty to work for refugee and his motherland Bangladesh.

Asif Currimbhoy is a non-practicing Muslim writer brought out the victory of humanity rather than the religion. In this play the dramatist presents the affection towards their religion and people belonging to their own religion. Sen Gupta is aware that refugees are Hindus in majority. That’s why Muslims kept quiet towards the brutality of Pak army. Ramul imagines himself as a king of the refugee camp and asks a person on the road, who are you? Are you a Muslim or Hindu? When he comes to know that he is a Muslim, orders to punish him. Yassin saves the Muslim refugee. Mita is the only person in the play who works without thinking of any religion. She believes that all refugees are human being and they are leading a life in an inhuman way. She is full of warmth of love and moral purpose. Krishna Avatar Agarwal says about play as “The play is on the theme of pangs and miseries of the refugees who were not put under the troubles by their own faults or crimes but it is simply the mounting ambition of the politicians. Asif Currimbhoy is successful in
giving his message to his readers that we should love humanity without distinguishing the nationality, caste or creed of a man or a woman”.

There is an ideological conflict between Yassin and Prof. Mosin. Yassin realizes that there is deference between Indian Muslim and Pakistani Muslim. The presence of Pakistan Muslim jeopardized the position of Indian Muslim, hence he has to be kicked out. Yassin realizes the fact that his presence has brought disturbance in friendship between Sen Gupta and Prof. Mosin.

In a confused state Yassin again goes to refugee camp, there he come across a girl with her dead mother with a spade in her hand. The girl does not speak; her voice has gone beyond grief. Yassin took the spade and digs the land. This action symbolizes his mind digs of past experience, in Comilla University, Pak army asked him to dig for his grave. At this point he realizes that he is unable to forget the past and he has to take action to fight against Pak Army. He took final decision after a long confusion that he has to join Mukti Fauj.

Yassin finally comes to a conclusion that he has to take an action. He is not confident about his decision. He decides to join Mukti Fauj, takes uniform and rifle and goes out of the house. Sen Gupta, Mita, Sarala, Ashok and Mosin are intolerant of closed attitude of Yassin towards the worst condition of East Pak. They force him indirectly to take some side or
action. He expresses his gratitude to Mita, who is indirectly responsible for helping him to take a decision. He feels affectionate towards Sarala who is tender and has motherly love towards Yassin. Yassin is neutral to Sen Gupta and says he will drop a letter to him about his address and other details after joining Mukti Fauj.

Currimbhoy skillfully constructed the plot of the play. Majority of the action takes place in the house of Sen Gupta, later the action moves in the refugee camp and the play ends in the house of Sen Gupta. There are five scenes in the play. Bayappa Reddy puts about the play as “The refugee is a neatly structured play with a beginning, middle and an end. The arrival of Yassin forms the beginning of the play. His stay in the house of Sen Gupta is the middle of the play. His decision to liberate East Bengal forms the ending of the play. The tempo is slow and almost even till Yassin decides to help the unhappy brethren of his country. With his decision to support the mighty cause of a struggling humanity, the tempo of the play quickens. This slow and quick tempo adds to the dramatic interest of the play”11.

Mita’s melodramatic announcement of the outbreak of cholera and her hysterical speech link Currimbhoy with his well made play models from the west.
Mita (continues): Refugees dying... like flies. Disease... spreading ...
(breathless) Trying heard ...to contain it. Much sympathy from outsider
(Looking straight at Yassin, the tears at last streaming down her face)
They say...at last ... (laughing and crying hysterical’y) ...the conscience
of the world is aroused. At last in crisis. The conscience. THE
CONSCIENCE. What a word oh my God what a meaning. Don't tell me it
escaped us all along the morality of it all. Here we are talking about
politics and refugees and war and even taking sides. It is not the lack of
commitment that matters, it's the lack of morality that does. And we
must ... both aggressor and giver of shelter...search for our own conscience.
(Silence and darkness). (p.34)

Dr. Chandrika opines: " The scene smacks of over-theatricality; a woman
talking at length in an emotional rhetoric, with tears streaming over her
face, is a really melodramatic figure. Yassin's second visit to the refugee
camp is also intended to create a sensation among the spectators when in
the eerie moonlight Yassin digs the grave to bury the mother of an
unknown refugee girl."12

Ramul is a typical and interesting character. He is the voice of all
refugees. He lives in a drainage pipe, and disgusted with the condition of
refugees. He is worried about the basic needs - food, cloth and shelter are
the urgent need of the refugees. Hence they need help from the neighbors.
The number of refugee increases, but help and warm welcome decreases.
But where should these millions of refugees go? He suggests to go to the neighbor house. There is garage and tree they can settle in that land. He behaves madly, but feels very sympathetic towards refugees. Ramul is a typical refugee, who thinks of himself a leader of refugee group and laughs at himself of being non-committed and screams nobody is going to throw (refugees) out of this place, they have come here to stay in this place.

Ideological conflicts form subtext of the play. Initially there is ideological conflict between Sen-Gupta and Yassin. Sen Gupta welcomes Yassin at his home, later feels irritated and calls him as a ‘closed’ person. Indirectly he influences Yassin to go out of his home. Later there is ideological difference between Mita and Yassin. Mita is committed to work for rehabilitation of refugees. Yassin, being a refugee idle, thinking of his conscience. At the end of the play, there is ideological difference between Yassin and Mosin. Mosin is an Indian Muslim and Yassin a Pakistani Muslim.

Ms. Sarita puts it as – "In The Refugee Asif Currimbhoy presents every character as a parallel and contrast to one another. Yassin and Sen Gupta are both erstwhile refugees, but they differ in their attitudes to life and demeanour; both cherish the ideal across the border symbolized by Yassin’s mother and Sen Gupta’s daughter. Yassin and Ramul are refugees, but their ways are entirely different – One closes his eyes to the problem and leads his own comfortable life while the other immerses
himself in the problem and reigns supreme in the world of refugees, Yassin and Professor Mosin are both Muslims - but the contrast is made evident in the last scene when one identifies himself with the Pakistani Muslim and the other with the Indian Muslim. The active rebellious children of Sen Gupta are contrasted against Yassin who is happy in his shell. One can even detect the unconscious contrast implied between Rukaiya, Sen Gupta’s ideal love and Sarala, his own wife”.

To conclude, dramatist focuses on one problem i.e., the problem of refugee in India in this one act play. All six characters are concerned with the exodus of over ten million Bangladesh refugees into India in 1971. Yassin runs from Combilla University, takes shelter in the house of Sen Gupta who was also a refugee at the time of partition, nearly 24 years ago. Yassin quests for his consciences, finally decides to liberate his fellow countrymen from the clutches of Pakistan and joins the Mukti Bhaini. There are five scenes in this one act play. Plot is well structured and has a beginning, a middle and an end. The characters are well portrayed. Yassin is type as well as an individual. Sen Gupta is a dominant character. He is confident and behaves like a politician., Ashok and Nita are ideals and committed to their works. Prof. Mosin also becomes selfish and Yassin finds out the attachment of Mossin as an Indian – Muslim. The language used in the play is simple, lucid and clear. Asif Currimbhoy dealt with
burning problems of the Indian society and who experimented with dramatic language and technique. P. Bayappa Reddy says:

“His sense of commitment has over powered his language which creates a sense of immediate action – the implied physical movements of restless violence, the questions and exclamations, out interest. And Asif’s sentence often performs two or three functions at once. It sheds light on the character speaking on the character spoken about; it furthers the plot; it almost functions ironically in conveying to the audience a meaning different from that conveyed to the characters”.14

Through this play Asif Currimbhoy upholds the moral values of life. Sarala is the mother (ma) loved by all. She shows motherly love and affection to Ashok and Yassin. She feels concerned and cries while Yassin leaving home to join Mukti – Bhaini. Mita is an incarnation of commitment to help human being irrespective religion, caste and creed. Ashok is concerned of people in the clutches of Pak army. Someone has to fight against Pak army, that someone might be anyone either Ashok or Yassin. Ashok took decision to join Mukti – Bhahini and convinced his parents that he took right decision. These values are skillfully brought out in the play.
One of the significant events is independence of Bangladesh in 1971, Asif Currimbhoy is moved by the heart touching atrocity and torture of the Pak army. The Liberation war in Bangladesh is a revolution sparked by the rise of the Bengali nationalist and self determination movement in East Pak and the 1971 Bangladesh genocide. It resulted in the independence of the people's Republic of Bangladesh. There was a systematic elimination of nationalist Bengali civilians, students, intelligential, religious minorities and armed personnel. Rural and urban areas across East Pakistan saw extensive military operations and air strikes to suppress the tide of Civil disobedience that formed the following the 1970 election stalemate. The members of the Pakistani military and supporting militias engaged in mass murder, deportation and genocidal rape and there are the scenes of numerous massacres.

The national liberation army formed by Bengali military, paramilitary and civilian is Mukti Bahini played crucial role in the resistance. The Bengali guerrillas also fought against Pakistani military. The plight of millions of war ravaged Bengali civilians caused worldwide outrage and alarm. The Indian state led by Indira Gandhi provided substantial diplomatic, economic and military support to Bangladeshi
nationalist. In the month of December 1971 Pak army surrendered to the Indian Force. (internet source)

*Sonar Bangla* is one of Bengal Trilogy of Asif Currimbhoy. The play is a clear picture of the pathetic condition of East Pakistan before its partition from Pakistan. The military harassment and the trauma of common people is presented in the play. The emergence of independent Bangladesh is not easy but it is a consequence of struggle of common people and horrors of war. The play is written in 1971, deals with division of East Pak with West Pak.

There are four acts in the play. Each act focus on important phase of the war. Currimbhoy has given the title of these acts based on the activities in these as

Act I: 25th March 1971: The Slaughter

Act II: Exodus: The Refugees

Act III: Liberation Force: The Mukti Bhaini

Act IV: The Final war

The title of the play is taken from Rabindranath Tagore's poem, as Hassan sings in act VI as-

“My golden Bengal, you are my love!
Your heavens and your atmosphere
In my heart play the flute
In the month of falgun your mango woods
With fragrant honey makes me mad...
Oh how glorious!
In Ferry – landings of Streams,
In village – cots under cool Shadows
Where birds are singing all day long
In house yards with paddy spread
The days of my life have their round.
My golden Bengal, you are my love”.15

The play opens with description of a well to do village home. Hassan, a diplomat, prays at a place of the engraved tomb. He looks at woman (Sumita) who is washing clothes near a stream. Maya, a daughter of Sumita, calls her mother and embraces in affection. Hassan looks at them till they leave the place.

In the Act -1 major characters are introduced. Aziz, a professor and Mahmood, a student, Hussain and Colonel discuss that the seeds of a resistance for Bangladesh are sown. The meeting between, Mujib and Yahya are breaking down, Yahya is not ready to accept Mujib as next Prime Minister. The election resulted in military dictatorship. The professor, Aziz believes in Gandhian philosophy of civil disobedience movement; the West Pak army will not be humble enough with Gandhian movement. Aziz is bold enough to deliver speeches against West Pak rule.
Hussain explains his plan of setting up of Mukti-Fauj, hence requires help in every angle – moral, material and other help.

A Bihari enters and request for help. After the victory of Awani League in election, every Bihari is a target of Bengali hatred, hence all Biharis are insecure in West Pak. Biharis are killed because they are treated as Pak sympathizers. Hence the situation has turned violent and the Pak military is preparing a big military buildup. Bihari has a ray of hope as he says: “Whether you believe it or not, the fact is that I believe in Mujib. He is the only moderate leader we have. If he survives, he may be able to control... the Mukti Bahini... and other extremists in his own Awani Party” (p.13). Bihari reveals another important message that Mujib is going to be killed if he goes out of the house for meeting. Hussain is loyal to Mujib as both have same dream of “Sonar Bangla” (p. 14).

Mujib tries his best to make the meeting a successful one. But Yahya Khan the chief martial law administrator, he is not ready to transfer power to Mujib. He asks Mujib to take the favour of Bhutto. Hussain is aware that Yahya will not transfer power, he is building up military camp to crush everyone in West Bengal. Yahya Khan appoints Tikka Khan for clearing process of the country on 25/03/1971. Tikka is a military man, known as “the Butcher from Baluchinstan” (p. 16).
Tikka Khan starts his work of cleansing and orders all the intellectuals from Dacca University to be punished. Aziz, a Professor is called for questioning, he is surprised to see that all the professors are tied and killed, their bodies are thrown in nearby river. Tikka Khan calls Bihari to give some information and take the side of military as he says.” In the next 24 hours I am going to have Bengal in the grip of my hand... with sword and fire. This is going to be our jehad... I want to build razakar…” (p21-22). He is very harsh and stone hearted fellow, has greater ambition of killing all the students, the professors, the Hindus and the Awami League leaders.

Hussain informs Mujib that everything has gone wrong. Yahya flew away to Rawalpindi, all the intelligentsia and active Awami Leaguers are wiped out. He asks Mujib to go underground so that he can save his life. But Mujib is loyal to his people, says that military will kill all people in search of him. If military catch him, let that happen.

Hussain ask his friend Anderson, a media person, to release the news of military act in West Bengal to the people of America. Meanwhile a military man comes to arrest Hussain but Hussain is clever enough to ask papers of arrest, then threatens him that Anderson would reveal the news to the world about arrest of a diplomat without proper documents, officer is confused and leaves without arresting Hussain.
In Dhanmandi home Sheikh Mujib is caught by officer. Mujib is a committed political leader, he wants democracy in his country and believes in Gandhian Philosophy. He opposes the military force of Yahya Khan. His wife supports him. She believes him as hero of the people. Hussain has good idea of getting help from India as he says to the Colonel as:

“I return to Calcutta. India is going to have a stake in this too. I’ll see to it that you get undercover military support and training for the Mukti - Fauj. I’ve been developing this with my West - Bengali brothers. They ‘ll help us to the hilt” (p.35).

The officers enter the house of Hussain and destroy everything. They kill Hari, a servant and presented it to Sumita. She leaves the house with her daughter in search of a safe place. Hussain comes to his house and shocked to see his destructed house and his mother's tomb, in fury and anguish he says: -“Oh, God oh God. I swear equally... that by fire and sword...I shall avenge... all who desecrated the tomb... took from me, ... my Sonar Bangla” (p. 37).

Asif Currimbhoy picturesquely presents the growth of worst situation in West Bengal. All the major characters are introduced in Act I, the brutality of military is introduced and it reaches its pinnacle in Act-II. Mujib and Hussain are loyal politician and diplomats. They are working
out the peaceful transfer of power. But East Pak is not ready, hence they want to have control over West Pak. Mujib is arrested, and Hussain goes to Calcutta to seek help from India.

Act II opens with discussion between Hussain and Ray. They are emotionally patriotic and recollect few lines of Tagore about Bengal. Farok Khan, Pak foreign Minister, sits in Hussain office in an arrogant and ill manner shows the transfer order of Hussain to Rawalpindi. Hussain tears the order without reading and shows the of flag of Bangladesh, outside as green – red and gold flag of Bangladesh. He is bewildered to see the flag of Bangladesh as he says – “What’s that flag doing there? There… there’s no Bangladesh. Just… a few traitors in the East..waving it around.. No..no Pakistan consulate.. can fly that flag.. Take it down… Take it down, I say! (p.41). The staff of Hussain come and threaten him to go away from the office of Hussain.

Act-II presents brutal slaughter and suffering of common people of West Pak in the hand of the Pak military. Sumita and her daughter Maya leave their house to join refugees in search of safe place. Hari, husband of Sumita is killed. They go to Kushtia village to take shelters in her friend's house Sarala. Kustia is a Hindu based village. But there is none, and whole village is ruined. She meets an old woman in the village. Military came in search of fugitive and could not find him. He escaped, they became angry for giving shelter to him in the village hence they burn the
village. They tied up the men, women and children packed them in crowded army trucks, and sent them away, never to return for human slaughter. In the whole village only four people are surviving – Sumita, Maya, old woman and a small child. They move to join refugee stream. Sumita has ray of hope and confidence that they will return to their native place one or the other day.

The heart touching picture of worst condition of refugees. They are travelling in bullock – cart, rickshaws, pull-carts, mostly by foot. They support each other, help each other, sharing each morsel of food. It was raining heavily and they took shelter in a shed. The number grows, each sharing their experience of military atrocity. On the other side, natives of West Pak are making effort to stop the East Pak army inhuman activities. There is Mukti Faju, who have thirst for revenge and courage, but they are ill trained. Colonel, and Mahmood ponder over the strengthen guerrilla skills. Mahmood read Mao’s red book. But their effort is very weak in front of West Pak army. But the people of West Pak have hope that they survive and they will return to teach a lesson to the Pak military and regain their homes and lands.

All refugees move near Jessore, close to the borders of West Bengal. They are depressed and tried. It was raining, refugees start narrating each other's story of nightmare of military. They have raped wife, daughter, mother in front of the family, killed children, husband was sent to
slaughter truck. They are missing their homes, belonging, someone from family. (p.52) One of the refugee says “do you know what it means to be a refugee… to be torn away from your mother’s breast…” (p. 52)

The dramatist presents harsh experiences of refugees in the play. There was a spread of the disease cholera and a child dies. Someone buries it, another vomits and another suffers from dehydration and all are hungry. In spite of all these problems they move to Indian border. Sumita holds an orphan child which is about to die. Old woman is unable to move as she is very weak. Maya holds the hand of old woman. They move to Jesser leaving Sumita and child. Sumita is waiting for her daughter for a long time. It was raining heavily, she covers with a mat, she felt herself feverish and looked after the child. But the child is dead and Sumita unaware of it. Arun comes in a bullock cart carrying his mother and stops at Sumita. His mother asks him to see what happened to Sumita, reluctantly he goes to her and checks that child is dead and buries it and he takes Sumita in his cart and moves towards the borders of India. Sumita repeatedly says where is her child. Arun thought of dead child, but Sumita is waiting for her daughter Maya, who has gone with old woman to Jesser. Currimbhoy traces human values that humanity is not dead. Arun and Sumita are not related to each other but he takes her to refugee camp. Sumita and an orphan child and an old woman in Kushtia are not related, but Sumita takes them with her. Though there is shortage
of food, they don’t have shelter for themselves, still they help each other. Arun buries the child, he knows that burial ritual is birth right of every one who takes birth on earth, buries the child instead of throwing it. There are the contradictory elements of brutal military acts with humanitarian acts in the play. East Pak Military massacre the humans, whereas, refugees help each other to let others to live.

Ray and Hussain are the embassies of India and West Pak respectively. They are discussing different ways of handling refugee problem. Earlier refugees were thousands in number. Hence Indians gave good treatment and arrangement to them. Elizabeth is a volunteer of Red Cross. She is anxious and demands more food, medicine, milk, staff etc to Ray to help the refugees.

Elizabeth is a service minded woman who comes from faraway place to Culcutta to help the refugees of the West Pak. Hussain appreciates her spirit of service. The disease cholera spreads, new refugees bring it in. The situation in hospital become worse there are patients laying on beds, lying on the floor, and outside. Arun brings Sumita to hospital who has become unconscious due to cholera. Hussain is in search of Sumita and Maya and asks Elizabeth to find them in refugee camp, though it is tough task to find them in millions of refugees.
Asif Currimbhoy gives the slight touch of romance in the play. Elizabeth and Hussain come close to each other, their aim and visions are same to serve the refugees. Elizabeth is in need of Hussain, they go for physical relation but Elizabeth is haunted by the view of Hussain’s search of Sumita, who was in the countryside of West Bengal and wife of Hussain’s servant.

In Act III Arun, Sumita, Ali and Yusuf join Mukti Bahini to take revenge against Pak soldiers. The number of volunteers in Mukti Bahini increases and got training of the guerrilla warfare. Humour is skilfully presented in the play with the character Mulla, who sees a dream which is too real. He imagines that he comes with a girl who is beautiful and he can enjoy her. He is religious too, afraid of God (Allah) who can see everything, but says that God knows human weakness and will not punish him for enjoying a girl, when the girl utters his name he feels pleasant and ask her to keep on saying. Yusuf and his friends observes Mullah and laugh “We meet ... the Mad Mulla from Mala. You’re quite a legend Mulla Sahib.” (p.73). Sumita says to leave him, when he heard her voice he feels again pleasant its ‘a voice from heaven’ “God Sent!” (73) again all laugh. Currimboy wisely makes audience to laugh in serious situation. Mulla or Maulvi is a kind hearted person, later joins Mukti Bhaini for liberation of East Pak.
Sumita is very passionate and determined. She has a vision to go to Jessor to find her daughter. She is source of inspiration to Arun and Mulla, they appreciate her. Even Hussain has got his inspiration indirectly from her. Pak soldiers surround them except Mulla and ask Sumita, Arun and Yusuf to drop their guns and surrender. Mulla plays and then takes revolver to aim at Pak soldiers, and they are released. Now onwards Mulla become part of Mukti Bahini.

Several efforts are made to fight for freedom; Ray is shocked to find himself in the middle position. On the one side millions of refugees hungry extending hands in India, another side pressure to declare a war against Pak. So that refugees will go back to their native place. Ray made arrangements of Indian army to support the guerrilla war fare with arms and training to the volunteers. But this is not sufficient. Hence the declaration of war is essential to bring complete liberation. Ray is not ready as it means complete enmity against Pak in future. The East Pak Army realizes that pressure is growing up day by day. They have two enemies - the Indian Army and the other is the Bengali people. They are between devil and deep sea.

Asif Currimboy has presents psychological trauma of common people. Arun tortures huge man who raped Sumita. He says “Twice! It’s happened to me no more No more… “(p.86) All the refugees revenge against Pak army. The refugees are motivated to learn guerrilla war fare.
Revenge changes into passion to get freedom from Pak army. After the victory of Jessor by Indian army, the common people scream with joy. At the same time, they turned to beast. They wanted to give back the same torture that Pak army had given to them. They say “The Swines! That’s Right! Make them scream more! Make them scream before they die!” (p.89). The Pak military declares war against India.

Voice of the Prime Minister:

"I speak to you to a moment of great peril to our country and our people... some hours ago, soon after 5:36 pm, on the 3rd of December, Pakistan suddenly launched a full-scale war against us..." (p.86). Mrs. Indira Gandhi has taken bold step to teach a lesion to Pak force. In the United Council Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Yahya speech are taken into consideration. Ray feels confident that they have got complete grip over Pak army. This war surely bring freedom to Bangladesh.

The dramatist excellently presents foreign policies of different countries in Act IV. Action takes place in the UN Security Council, President called meeting for resolution for immediate cease – fire and withdrawal of troops. Russia has been supporting India. Britain and French are neutral and America and China have their own wishes to be fulfilled. Chinese are contemplating an imminent invasion against India; America is supporting Pakistan and supplying arms to Pakistan through
third World countries in the Middle East. The dramatist has created great climax and tension of the things going on at the International level. The United council is unaware of the reality when Anderson published in newspaper about East Pak military activities in the West Pak and discussion of international delegates, America realized its mistake and leaves East Pak to fight against India without any help from western countries. All the commanders are asked to surrender. Hotel intercontinental is made into a neutral zone. On 16<sup>th</sup> December 1971, commanders surrender to Indian army unconditionally.

The people of East Pak Bengalis are happy and scream as “Jai Bangla”. They garlanded the Indian Jawans when Dacca became free from the Pak army. Maya rushes to her house, Sumita also runs to find her daughter. Sumita is happy that her daughter is safe and healthy. She screams as Maya… Maya… The name ‘Maya’ means illusion i.e., cannot be caught in hands. Sumita’s daughter is Maya, she is not caught by the Pak army and other men. Maya has been escaping from the sight of everyone. Sumita searches her everywhere, she moves from Jessor to Dacca. Audience does not see Maya till the end of the play. Through conversation one hears that Maya is in Jessor, then she moves to Dacca, then she runs to her country side house, but she is not visible to anyone. The meeting of mother and daughter is presented through shadow screen Sumita still running calling Maya, from the other side calling out ‘mother’ they reach other, clasp each other in their arms.
Bangladesh is liberated from the Pak army. There is a great task of nation building. Mr. Anwar Hussain feels exhausted. Anderson says bye to him, but assures him that whenever there is need he would help. Hussain is worried to think of his home where his mother was buried. Elizabeth comes and expresses her dissatisfaction, goes away.

The people of Bangladesh are aware of sacrifice of Mujib Rahaman, they call him as Bangabandhu. He was imprisoned for nine months by Pak army. Mujib’s trail has lasted for last six months, Yahya, the Chief Martial–Law orders the trail. Mujib is to be hanged. The conversation reveals that Bengal has been occupied by Hindu India and number of Pakistani prisoners are in the hands of Indians. Hence Bhutto wants Mujib to be free so that all Pakistani prisoners will become free from Indian force. Mujib disagree with this argument, he is ready to be in jail forever. Bhutto tries to compromise and asks East Pakistan and West Pakistan to be together, now she is ready to give what she refused earlier. Mujib refuses and heard the voice; “Jai Bangla”, Jai Bangla” “Jai Bangla”. He comes out of Jail. Mujib is depressed and feels hurt as he says:

“Till December 27th, when I met Bhutto, I did not know what had happened… But I knew, I understood what had been happening in my country even during my months of solitary confinement. I always knew my people were behind me. I knew that God would help me. That’s what kept me going. I never wept during all those months in solitary
confinement. I never wept when they put me on trail. But I wept when I arrived back here and saw my wonderful Sonar Bangla.” (p.105).

Hussain also depressed to see the condition of his 'Sonar Bangla'. His house is ruined and his mother's grave is destroyed, similarly to achieve independence people lost their kith and kin and homes. Sonar Bangla is achieved after the sacrifice, suffering and bloodshed of lots of people.

Asif Currimbhoy is skilled at presenting characters in the play. Anwar Hussain, a diplomat, is sympathetic with refugee as he was also previously a refugee. He struggled hard to give best to the refugee. He is in touch with Roy to give shelter to the refugee. He visits the hospital where the refugees are taking treatment and shocked to see their condition. He becomes very close with Elizabeth, a Red Cross volunteers, appreciates her sacrificing service for the refugees in the camp. He requested Roy to provide military help to the guerrilla warfare. He goes to the United Council to make the situation in favour of West Pak i.e. Bangladesh. Finally, he is depressed to see Independent Bangladesh, as ruined and destroyed. He is poetic also. He always recollects the poems of Rabidranath Tagore and sings the song at the end of the play.

The relationship between Sumita and Hussain is unclear. Sumita is a wife of Hari, a servant in Hussain house. He observes her when she was
washing clothes at stream in the beginning of the play. He asks Elizabeth to find Sumita in refugee camp. He tells that Sumita is his childhood acquaint and there is no love affair with her. He gets his source of inspiration indirectly from her.

Sumita is passionate, determined and has a vision to go to Jessor to find her daughter still her death. Maya left her mother on the way to refugee camp with an old woman to Jessor. Hence she is in search of her daughter. She got information that her daughter is in Jessor and moves to Jessor. Unfortunately, she is caught by a old man who drops here in a room and raped by a huge man. Latter Arun tortures and kills him. She is a source of inspiration to Arun and Mulla and they appreciate her. Even Hussain got inspiration from her.

Ray is an Indian diplomat and embassy to Pak. He extents his maximum help to Hussain. He arranges for refugee camp, training to guerrilla warfare, provides arms and ammunition to Mukti Bahini. He is helpless to force central government to declare war against Pak. He goes to the United Council to make situations in favour of Bangladesh. Ray is humble, kind and sympathetic towards refugees.

Elizabeth is a foreigner, Red Cross volunteer who serves the refugees. She is humble, service minded and sacrificing. She is attracted towards Hussain and had physical relation with him. She appreciates
Hussain for his struggle to build a nation – Bangladesh. But she is haunted by Hussain's affection towards Sumita. At the end of the play she goes to her native place. Elizabeth has come to India with the mission to help the needy. It is her faith that to serve god is to help the needy. Before leaving to her native place she meets Hussain and tells that she loves him a lot. Whenever there is need of her help she would be glad to help him. Hussain says "she is a beautiful woman" (p102). Arun, Mulla and Yusuf are also important characters. They join Mukti Bahini to take revenge against Pak army. Later this revenge turned into a movement to get independence.

The plot construction of the play is very systematic and clear in *Sonar Bangla*. There are four acts and proper beginning, middle and an end. Actions in Act I takes place in country side of West Pak (Now Bangladesh). In Act II actions take place on road where refugees move to Indian border, then moves to Ray house, dining table, then to hospital of refugee camp. In Act III actions take place in forest, bridge side road, where Sumita, Arun, Ali and Mulla fight against Pak soldiers and move towards Jessor. Action of Act IV take place in United Council then comes back to Hotel Intercontinental which has been made into a neutral zone. Then action moves to Hussain house in country side, where he is depressed to see the ruined home.
Asif Currimbohy knows that there is no caste or religion for love, care and affection. The relationships between Sumita and Mulla, and Hussain and Elizabeth are the best examples. Sumita is a Hindu, Malla and Hussain are Muslims and Elizabeth is a Christian. They have not bound their affection to any religion. Mulla craves for Sumita's love and affection. In a humorous way Sumita says that she will convert Mulla as a Hindu, if they get married he has to believe in husband and wife relation as life after life (Janma Janmada relation). When Mulla dies Sumita cries a lot for his death. Mulla is happy that he is dying on Sumita's arm. At the time of death Mulla says: "Tears? Tears? My dear? Does it matter that we shall meet in my one heaven or in your never ending lives... Sumita my love... Hold me..." (p90).

Hussain and Elizabeth are close to each other. Both are self sacrificing and helping the refugees. Elizabeth loves Hussain. Hussain says "at last you’ are the most beautiful woman I’ve ever known. You’re the most lovely woman I ever made love to". (p102)

It’s very ironic that people fight for the supremacy of their own religion. But love, affection, care, sympathy is not bound by any religion. Pak army and some commanders fail to realize this truth in the play.

Prof. Bayappa Reddy's statement is worth quoting: --“Sonar Bangla is built on conflict. The main conflict is between East Pakistan and West Pakistan. Then there is conflict between the Hindus and Muslims in East
Pakistan resulting in the conflict between Bengali Muslims and Bengali guerillas. The conflict reaches its pinnacle when the refugee problem ultimately results in the war between West Pakistan and India. Besides the external conflict there is internal conflict. There is conflict in Hussain’s mind as he is worried about “the pain and scars there’re going to tear his Sonar Bangla once again..." In the mind of Mujib too there is conflict when he arrives in Bangladesh after his release, and weep over the pathetic condition of his “Wonderful Sonar Bangla”.

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar puts in the article as: - “Again, how direct, how utterly sufficient, how charged with meaning is the title Songer Bangla! Not a piece of rhetoric, or poetry; not a sentimental idealization of a piece of earth; for essentially and ultimately, “Sonar Bangla” the motherland is centered in a mother, a woman. For the diplomat, Hussain, Sonar Bangla is his home incarnated in the native innocence, beauty and power of Sumita. The whole continent is in upheaval. Millions become refugees, millions die or are butchered. But behind the mass killings and the mass sufferings, there is the trail the travail, the tragedy and the final triumph of Sumita and her daughter Maya – these holding the quintessence of the deathless beauty and sublime endurance of Sonar Bangla.”

Asif Currimbhoy uses music to present bloodshed and suffering more impressively is Act II. Gulam tries to save his life hence goes to
Kushtia village where audience hear the sound of the chase, splash of water, military troop chase again, music of heavy breathing. Pak army follows Gulam and slaughter the whole village. This incident is indicated through sounds. Bloodshed cannot to be presented on the stage, hence Currimbhoy uses music to present the intensity of action. The language is crisp and lucid. Dialogues are suitable to characters. There some Hindi words to depict the touch of nativism such as- razakar, mukti bahini, jihad, musalman and the title of the play Sonar Bangla is also Hindi words.

To conclude Sonar Bangla presents the eternal struggle of humanity against suppression and repression as well as the ultimate victory of humanism over brutality. The common people of East Pak are full of national feelings. The students also involve in nation building activity and they also involve in political field. They want to see their land free from West Pakistan government. They create revolutionary history. The playwright is successful in giving the real picture of East Pakistan in the play. John Russell says: "For a mirror to hold up to human nature that can reflect the unspoken and the unspeakable with more clarity of form and continuance of pleasure than dialogue of statement".\(^{18}\) It is assessed that one of the significant historical events of creation of independent Bangladeshis brought on the stage. Asif Currimbhoy is an authentic voice of people and writes actable plays.
REFERENCES


10 Agarwal, op.cit., p.51.


